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Sent: 10/30/2008 3:38:41 AM
Subject: FW: Honolulu Advertiser - Officials: Rail study out in a 'few days'

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Sent: Thursday, October 30, 2008 9:07 AM
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October 30, 2008

Officials: Rail study out in a 'few days'

Kobayashi says voters deserve information before Tuesday election

By SEAN HAO
Advertiser Staff Writer

The city will release a major new study, including an updated cost estimate, on Mayor Mufi Hannemann's proposed elevated commuter rail line in "the next few days."

The Federal Transit Administration gave the city the green light yesterday to release the draft environmental impact statement for the planned \$3.7 billion transit system. The timing of the release is now up to the city.

City Council member Ann Kobayashi, who's also running against Hannemann for mayor, called on the city to immediately release the study.

"We should have it ... and we should be sharing it with the public so they can make an informed decision," Kobayashi said.

On Tuesday, voters will be asked whether they want the city to move forward with the rail plan. The city did not say if the study will be released before voters go to the polls.

The city Department of Transportation Services said in a news release yesterday, "The Rapid Transit Division of DTS will coordinate the local distribution of the (study) within the next few days after including material to address State of Hawai'i environmental laws."

City transportation director Wayne Yoshioka told the City Council's Executive Matters Committee yesterday, "We will make every effort to release it as soon as we can."

Yoshioka added, "The election has nothing to do with it (the timing of the release). What determines the release of it is when I get word from RTD that the document is ready for release."

The document originally was scheduled for completion in spring of this year.

The 20-mile train route from East Kapolei to Ala Moana is expected to cost \$3.7 billion to build, or about \$5 billion when adjusted for inflation, according to a 2006 study by the city. Those costs estimates are expected to increase in the draft environmental impact statement to account for inflation.

The updated draft environmental impact statement also will include updates on the number of potentially affected properties, noise and visual impacts, and potential impacts on archaeological sites.

Separately yesterday, the City Council's Intergovernmental Affairs Committee passed a resolution asking the state to steer a more than \$18 million transit tax windfall back to city coffers, where it can be spent on rail.

Hannemann hopes to break ground on the train in December 2009 and begin partial operations by the end of 2012. The full 20-mile, 19-station elevated commuter line would take about a decade to build.

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